

Senator George McGovern and Dr. William Polk on one such plan. This is a unique opportunity for Members to discuss available options. I encourage my colleagues to join us at this forum on Friday, day after tomorrow, at 9:30 in the Cannon caucus room.

We know there is no quick solution to put Iraq and the region back together again. But until we start to seriously consider the plans out there, we are stuck with President Bush's escalation and status quo. And you know what? Because I respect the troops and I respect their families so very much, I refuse to "stay the course."

So I tell the President: No, no to escalation. I tell the President: No, no to the status quo. And I say: Yes, yes to strengthening our Nation by protecting those who have already given so very much and bringing them home to their families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE IRISH PEACE PROCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, first let me say how happy I am to see our Speaker, the gentleman from New Jersey, who I would mention to my colleagues was the Speaker of the General Assembly in the State of New Jersey, so he certainly knows what to do in the Speaker's chair. Great to see you up there this evening.

I come to the floor this evening to once again call on Dr. Ian Paisley and the Democratic Unionist Party to support peace and justice in Northern Ireland and not get in the way of creating a truly devolved government. I call on my colleagues to support the "New Beginning" policy envisioned in the Good Friday Agreement and the subsequent Patten Report, even as Northern Ireland tackles the controversial issue of setting up a fair and effective criminal justice system.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has called Sinn Fein's leadership under President Gerry Adams "remarkable," and I certainly agree. Despite a long history of unfair treatment and attacks by unionist paramilitaries and others, Sinn Fein is moving down the path to devolution by supporting the Police Service of Northern Ireland and working with the criminal justice system.

In order for the citizens of Northern Ireland to have a police force they can respect and cooperate with, they need to be assured that power sharing will be restored and officials will ensure

sufficient accountability to prevent the types of abuses that have plagued the Catholic community in the north for so long.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Northern Ireland and all of the political parties must be involved in the process to create a New Beginning to Policing. Since the Patten Commission Report in September 1999, much progress has been made in terms of increased recruiting of Catholic officers, establishment of district policing boards, and increased oversight and accountability of the police service. The St. Andrews Agreement, issued this past year, showed that the path to restoring critical political institutions should include support for and devolution of policing.

Sinn Fein has taken the bold step of moving forward to support the policing institutions, and now Dr. Paisley seems to want to stay in the past instead of recognizing that it is time to move forward with a police service and a government that respects and represents all the people of Northern Ireland.

Mr. Speaker, I again commend Gerry Adams, the leadership of Sinn Fein, Prime Minister Blair, and the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahearn, for all their hard work and courage in moving the peace process forward. It will not be easy to overcome the troubling history of discrimination and distrust between communities in Northern Ireland. I hope, however, that Dr. Paisley and the membership of the Democratic Unionist Party will put aside the politics of the past and become a partner in moving towards a just and lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ADERHOLT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE WAR IN IRAQ, LATINOS AND TROOP ESCALATION PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, good evening to you and to those families that are listening to us tonight.

I believe our Nation needs a policy to secure and stabilize Iraq, one that constructively engages in diplomacy and partners with neighboring countries and the region to create a stable and peaceful Nation in Iraq.

Unfortunately, President Bush missed the opportunity to set the United States on a new course in Iraq. Without a plan to secure the peace and stabilize Iraq, President Bush's plan will do nothing but unnecessarily risk the lives of more U.S. servicemen.

I have here displayed 13 of those service members who represent my district,

most of whom, if you can look through each, are under the age of 30 and who left families, parents and children. They went to serve our country with honor, no doubt, but many of them enlisted in the Reserve and the Guard hoping that they would come back to get a college education, to have a better life, to be able to get housing and to get health care for their families. Unfortunately, that dream is not true for many of them.

There are approximately, at this time, 132,000 U.S. troops serving in Iraq. This war, as you know, is having a significant impact on our families and our communities. Last December was the deadliest month of the war in over 2 years. U.S. casualties have exceeded well over 3,000 lives, and more than 22,700 servicemen and women have been permanently injured or disabled. Nearly half of those will not be able to lead a normal life.

While Latinos make up just about 12 percent of the U.S. population, they make up 17 percent of the service men and women in combat in Iraq, and about 11 percent of those have already been killed.

In the District that I represent in California, we have lost these young men. Sadly, Latinos, both citizens and noncitizens, and I mean those that carry green cards, are proudly there to serve our country, but we need to do more for them.

In 2001 to 2005 alone, the number of Latinos in the Army who enlisted rose by 26 percent. There are currently 35,136 green card soldiers proudly serving our country today. An additional 28,000 have become U.S. citizens since 9/11, and 73 have been granted citizenship after death.

This includes one of my very own, who was a fallen soldier early in the war, a young man, Lance Corporal Francisco Martinez, in the Marines, representing the City of Duarte in the San Gabriel Valley. His service to this Nation is countless. He was not even a U.S. citizen. He gave his life and was granted posthumous citizenship. But we need to do more for our soldiers than that.

The plan the President is going to speak to us of tonight ignores the real needs of our troops and the reality of the situation. Three times in the past 2 years President Bush has increased the number of troops in Iraq. Three times the approach has failed. From November 2004 to March 2005, the level of U.S. troops increased from 12,000 to 150,000. The increase did nothing to improve long-term security.

During the constitutional referendum in the fall of 2005, troop levels increased by 22,000 soldiers, for a total of more than a 160,000 American service men and women in Iraq. Again, this increase, while limiting major violence during the referendum, did nothing to improve the long-term security in that particular area.

During Operation Together Forward, the Bush administration sent additional troops to Baghdad. The U.S.